



## The Be SMART Campaign

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America launched the Be SMART campaign to promote secure firearm storage practices and reduce child gun deaths. The campaign focuses on education and awareness about unintentional shootings, firearm suicide, and other incidents of gun violence that result from child access. Volunteers with Moms Demand Action encourage parents and caretakers to “Be SMART” and take these five simple steps to help prevent unintentional shootings by children and teens: Secure all guns in your home and vehicles; Model responsible behavior around guns; Ask about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes; Recognize the role of guns in suicide; Tell your peers to Be SMART. For more information visit [BeSMARTforKids.org](http://BeSMARTforKids.org).

## Why is this an important public health issue?

Children in the US are 21 times more likely to die from gun violence than children in other high-income countries.<sup>1</sup> Gun violence involving children—including homicides and assaults, unintentional discharges, and suicides and acts of self-harm—can happen anywhere, and adults everywhere can play an important role in preventing it. Research shows that:

- 4.6 million children in America live in homes with at least one gun that is both loaded and unlocked.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 350 children gain access to a firearm and unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else each year, often occurring in the home and often involving a gun that was not securely stored.<sup>3</sup>
- More than 600 children die by suicide with a gun each year.<sup>4</sup>
- One study estimated that if half of households that leave at least one gun unlocked switched to locking all their guns, one-third of all preventable youth deaths from firearm suicide and unintentional shootings—251 youth fatalities—could be prevented in a single year.<sup>5</sup>

Be SMART adults can protect kids by storing guns so that they are locked, unloaded and are located separately from ammunition, taking steps to make sure children never get unauthorized access to unsecured guns.

For more information on unintentional shootings by children, refer to our [#NotAnAccident Index](#). This interactive map tracks publicly reported incidents of unintentional shootings by children 17 years old and younger since 2015.

## What can the medical community do?

Medical professionals have always been central to solving public health crises, and the issue of child and teen gun deaths and injuries requires involvement from the front lines of medical care. The medical community can:

- Ask patients about how guns are secured in the home.
- Include gun safety as a core part of the training and education of all medical professionals.